The Cincinnati Kid

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He was known as The Kid,
The only thing he did
Was gamble, with the cards or with the dice,
Day in, day out, he played,
Few were the men who stayed,
Few were the men who could afford the price.

The Kid had nerves of steel,
And he played every deal
With a precision few men ever learn,
He'd bluff a massive pot,
Take every cent they'd got,
He knew the odds and beat them all in turn.

Stud poker was his game,
And slowly spread his fame
Until *numero uno* heard of him;
A grey-eyed man named Lancey,
Always the bookies' fancy,
But some said he would be out on a limb.

"Hey Kid, Lancey's in town."
He answered with a frown,
"You don't say," Saint Louis was hot this spring.
The Kid paused, licked his lips,
Picked up a stack of chips,
And put the sucker who'd re-raised all-in.

He walked out in the Sun.
The others were broke, done.
Life was good for The Kid, his lot was blessed,
But he would never be
Content in life till he
Not Lancey Hodges was known as the best.

Lancey was old and tired,
But wasn't yet expired,
The Shooter told The Kid to wait a while,

But youth is ever sure,
And he was Simon Pure,
He'd take the old man out with grace and style.

The match was on! The Kid
Would make his fateful bid
For Lancey's crown that day in 3-1-1;
They sat down in the room,
A sense of creeping doom
Surrounding Lancey as the deals were done.

If Lancey had a pair,
The Kid had two, was there
A surer sign The Kid's youth would prevail?
If Lancey had king big,
He couldn't bluff a fig,
A massive raise would be to no avail.

Then came that fateful pot,
Lancey was looking shot,
He showed eight-nine, The Kid showed tens on top,
He raised, The Kid raised back,
Would the old timer crack?
Lancey was surely done with such a flop.

But Lancey took the raise,
His grey eyes met the gaze
Of his tormentor as he swigged his booze,
He thought about the odds,
And piled up two thick wads
Throwing them in as though he couldn't lose.

He drew a heart, the ten,
A queen hit The Kid when
It looked as though a bluff was in the air,
With three hearts to the board
Was The Kid over-awed?
Was he Hell! Lancey couldn't beat his pair.

The final cards were dealt,
And two queens hit the felt,
But Lancey's was the heart, The Kid's was black,
He checked, and Lancey bet,
He didn't break a sweat
As he raised; Lancey couldn't find the jack.

But Lancey raised him back,
The Kid looked at his stack,
And said “I’d call but I’m short of your raise.”
“I’ll take your marker, Kid.”
He did as Lancey bid,
And Lancey’s next move left him in a daze.

He turned his hole card over,
The Kid had been in clover,
But now his world caved in, the room went black,
And then, quiet as a mouse
He faced his busted house,
And stared in disbelief at Lancey’s jack.

Five hearts: a running flush,
His face too drained to blush,
The Kid could only mutter he was done.
A roar went round the room
As Lancey’s one-time gloom
Was lighted like a mirror in the Sun.

Then Lancey spoke, “Kid you’re
The real deal, that’s for sure,
The meanest poker player East or West,
But you’ve a lot to learn,
Bide your time, wait your turn,
Cos while I’m still around, you’re second best.”